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U.S. Office of Price  
Administration

How you can help keep  
wartime prices down!

[Washington]

[1942]

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**how  
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keep wartime**

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October 1942



**... for bread and milk mean  
high prices for bullets and planes!**

When prices go sky high, everyone suffers.

You suffer, because your paycheck doesn't go as far—and you can't buy the things you need.

Your Government suffers, because war materials cost more—and your tax dollars don't buy Victory as soon!

Today, there is more money than there are things to buy. Factories that used to make radios are making tanks and planes. So there are not as many radios on sale.

But more people are working. They earn more than they did.

For every stove or kitchen knife on sale, there may be several people who want to buy. So prices go up.

On May 18, and again on October 5, your Government, through the Office of Price Administration, did something to stop prices from going up.

It told storekeepers that they could not raise the prices of the things they sell (with few exceptions).

The Government called this "putting a ceiling on prices."



**CEILING PRICES ARE PROTECTION PRICES!**

## UNCLE SAM HAS PUT A LID ON PRICES ...



...so they don't "boil over"

"Ceiling prices" are protection prices.

They protect your paycheck; they protect your housekeeping money; they protect your savings; they protect your insurance money, AND they protect the money your Government spends to buy war materials.

Ceiling prices help stop the runaway price rises called inflation, where your cost of living keeps running ahead of your paycheck, no matter how fast your paycheck increases.

And ceiling prices protect the families whose incomes cannot increase including all those whose menfolk have gone to war to protect America.

## HOW PRICE CONTROL affects what you buy

Let's say a store charged: **25c** for 3 cakes of soap

during the time which the government selected as the "base period" to set the ceiling price. (For soap this was March 1942.)



And charged: **27c** for 3 cakes of the same soap

between March and the date the ceiling price was applied. (For soap this was May 18, 1942.)

**NOW** it must charge no more than: **25c** for 3 cakes of that soap.



**It's against the law to charge more!**  
(But you might have paid 30, 35, or 40c if prices had gone up and up and up.)

Warning: Remember, the ceiling price of *all* price-controlled things you buy were not set in March 1942. Many *foods* were not brought under ceilings until October. The ceiling prices of these are therefore based on later periods. Remember also that some ceiling prices have been adjusted and slight increases permitted. This was done to relieve a "squeeze" in those stores whose March ceilings were abnormally low and to restore certain food items to store shelves.

# 7 things YOU should know

**1. THE CEILING PRICE** is the highest price the Office of Price Administration permits a given store to charge you for anything it sells that is price-controlled.

**2. NO STORE CAN CHARGE YOU MORE** than its ceiling price for anything but it may charge you less. Ceiling prices do not prevent sales and bargains.



**3. CEILING PRICES ARE NOT THE SAME IN ALL STORES.** Each store must set its own ceiling prices as directed by the Price Regulation. You can shop around as you always have for "best buys."

**4. CEILING PRICES MUST BE POSTED** on the everyday things you buy (called "cost-of-living items"). These prices must be shown where you can see them easily when you buy. (For a list of items on which the ceiling prices must be shown, see pages 21 and 22.)

# about PRICE CONTROL...

**5. EVERY STORE MUST KEEP A LIST OF ALL ITS CEILING PRICES** for inspection at any time by the Office of Price Administration, and it must show you this list whenever you ask to see it. This list is called the "base price statement."

**6. CEILING PRICES REQUIRE** the store to continue giving you the same quality and quantity for the same price. Any attempt to sell you less or poorer quality at the same ceiling price is a violation of the law.

**7. IT IS YOUR DUTY** as a citizen to protect yourself and stores that are obeying the law by reporting violations of the Price Regulation at once in writing to your local War Price and Rationing Board.

## What About Price Ceilings on Services?

Most **SERVICES** are under **PRICE CONTROL** too. Laundry, dry-cleaning, auto-repairing, and similar services have price ceilings. Personal and professional services, however, do not.

# WHO does the controlling?



## First of all, YOU do!

You have to help make Price Control work by knowing what is and what is not price controlled (see pages 21 and 22); by seeing that ceiling prices are posted in the stores, and by seeing that you don't pay more than the ceiling price for anything that HAS a ceiling price.

Your Government needs your cooperation.

Your storekeeper needs your cooperation.

• **AS TO THE THINGS YOU BUY**—A Local War Price and Rationing Board has been set up in your district. You should report to your Board in writing any violation of the price regulation in regard to ceiling prices, proper price posting, or lowered quality.

• **AS TO RENTS**—An OPA area rent director has been or will be set up in your neighborhood as rapidly as funds permit and personnel can be recruited. Every rent payer in America now lives in an area which has been designated a "defense rental" area. (You can find out more about rent control on page 15.)

## Here's how you can help when you Shop and Market



**KNOW** what price ceilings mean and how they protect you. Read this booklet carefully and see that other members of your family, and your neighbors, read it too. Then follow its instructions when you shop.



**CARRY YOUR LIST** with you when you market or shop. Then you can see which things must have a price ceiling posted. Look for the signs and tags on these and you won't have to ask the storekeeper what the ceiling price is.



**ALWAYS LOOK** for ceiling prices! They may be marked: on the can or package itself; on the shelf, bin, rack or container; on a sign, on the price tag, or on the wall near the counter where the goods are displayed.



**DON'T PAY MORE** than the ceiling price. You need not be unpleasant about it; just explain to the storekeeper that there is a ceiling price for his protection as well as yours. And it's up to both of you to see that he observes it.



## Here is what ceiling price signs look like...



↑  
They may be listed



↑  
Appear on the price tag



↑  
or displayed on the shelf or rack

The main thing is—they must be up where you can see them!

You should LOOK for ceiling prices when you shop!

And on all items on which the store is not required to mark or post the price, you should ASK: "What is the ceiling price?" before you buy!

## If you think you are being charged too much, do this...



**First**—IF you know an item is price-controlled, ask the store what the ceiling price is. (If they are unable or unwilling to tell you then they are breaking the law.)

**Next**—IF there is any doubt in your mind about the legality of the price, ask for a sales slip or receipt.

**Then**—Send this slip or receipt with full details (as shown on the next page) to your nearest War Price and Rationing Board.

The War Price and Rationing Board will forward your complaint to the nearest OPA office authorized to handle it. This office will investigate and where necessary it will take legal action against the store.

**Important**—Price control protects the store-keeper as well as you from rising prices. *Help the stores that are obeying the law by refusing to patronize those that are breaking it.* Even if this involves inconvenience on your part, it is your patriotic duty to shop at those stores which have enlisted 100% in the battle to keep down the cost of living in wartime.

# HOW TO REPORT AN OVERCHARGE

Be very sure you have a sound complaint before you report that a store's charging more than its ceiling price for an item.

All complaints should go to your local War Price and Rationing Board. You can get in touch with them easily. Consult the telephone directory or call information or just address a letter—

Chairman,  
War Price and Rationing Board,  
Name of city.

There is no need to go in person. It will save your time and the Board's to write.

Your complaint will be kept confidential. It is your wartime DUTY to report violations, so that the Law can be observed.

## When you report, be sure to tell

1. the name of the store.
2. the address.
3. the date when you made the purchase.
4. the price you paid or were asked to pay.
5. the name of the article, the brand, the size, the grade and anything else you think is important.
6. if you can, put down the price charged for the same article in the base period.
7. what price is shown on the store's own base period statement.
8. enclose the sales slip or receipt, if you have one.
9. sign your own name and address.

## Here's what a report should tell—

War Price and Rationing Board,  
200 Main Street, Blanktown.

Dear Sirs: On August 20 I bought three loaves of Beaver Brand Bread at the Tastee Food Store, 20 Washburn Street, Blanktown. I enclose the sales slip for 29c. There was no ceiling price sign posted but the clerk told me that this was the ceiling price. I used to pay 25c for 3 loaves this size in March 1942 and the store's own base period statement shows 25c as the ceiling price. Isn't 29c an overcharge? And shouldn't the ceiling price be posted?

Cordially yours,

Mrs. Cooperative Housewife  
500 Main Street.

You can also take action yourself if you have been charged more than the ceiling price. The Price Control Act permits you to sue the storekeeper in the local court for \$50 or three times the amount of the overcharge, whichever is greater. If it is proved that you have been charged too much the court may award you the full amount plus court costs and attorney's fees.



## WHAT ABOUT YOUR RENT?

### The whole Nation is subject to rent control

On October 3, 1942, the President directed:

"That part of the Nation which has not yet been designated within defense rental areas should now be so treated. We should make no distinction between city and country residents as to their participation in the total war effort.

"I wish you [Price Administrator, Leon Henderson] would immediately issue appropriate orders to prevent rent increases on urban and rural dwellings. In such areas as you deem appropriate to reduce current rents, I am sure you will proceed to take such action as may be necessary."

### Many areas already have rent ceilings

First, find out if you live in such an area. Ask your neighbors or consult your local newspaper.

Rent control is simple. If you live in an area under rent ceilings, you should not pay more, in most instances, than your landlord charged for your apartment or house on a certain base date. Rents can be higher *only* if a landlord has made substantial improvements in the property since then.

You will receive by mail from your Area Rent Director a statement showing what *your* legal rent is. If you do not agree with that statement, simply return it to the Rent Director telling him the reasons why.

### Important:

To get in touch with your Area Rent Director, simply do one of the following:

Call information and ask for the phone number  
or

Address a letter to: Area Rent Director  
Name of your Area



## ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

**Q.** *What additional foods were placed under price ceilings on October 5, 1942?*

**A.** Butter, cheese, evaporated and condensed milk, poultry and eggs; also flour, corn meal, dried onions, dried beans, white potatoes, mutton, fresh and canned citrus fruit and juices, including oranges, lemons, limes, and grapefruit.

**Q.** *What foods are now NOT under price ceilings?*

**A.** The only important foods which are not now under price ceilings are these seasonal foods: Fresh fish, peanuts, fresh fruits and vegetables (except oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit, white potatoes, and onions).

**Q.** *What are some of the most important foods on which stores have been permitted to make a small increase in price?*

**A.** The main food groups on which stores have been permitted to place new ceiling prices because of higher prices at wholesale, due to increased cost of raw products, are: Breakfast cereals, canned fish, coffee, sugar, cooking and salad oils, canned and frozen fruits and vegetables, rice, shortenings, dried fruit, and lard.

**Q.** *Couldn't an unpatriotic merchant get around price control by cutting out certain services he used to give or by selling poorer quality merchandise at the same price?*

**A.** A storekeeper must obey the spirit as well as the letter of the law. He may not eliminate services simply in order to avoid the requirements of the price-control order.

But that does not mean that stores cannot change their services at all. Stores can cut down on deliveries to save tires and gasoline; they can cut down on paper bags and wrappings to help save paper for war needs. And they will be encouraged to make certain other economies to help them adjust their businesses to the price "squeeze."

As far as quality is concerned, a store cannot sell you a poorer quality article as a method of getting around price control. However, it should be realized that the needs of war production for many materials, such as leather and wool, will have to result in poorer quality goods for civilians in some cases. If those goods are cheaper to manufacture, the Office of Price Administration will make every effort to see that the price is reduced proportionately.

**Q.** *How are we going to make sure that prices are really controlled?*

**A.** This is a job of cooperation—cooperation between your Government, your storekeeper, and you. Obeying the price-control regulations is as much a part of wartime duty on the home front as a soldier's obedience to his officers' commands on the military front. Cooperation, patriotism, and the "teeth" in the Price-Control Law will guarantee enforcement.

**Q.** *Can prices lower than the ceiling be charged?*

**A.** Yes, they can go as low as the seller wishes. But they cannot go one cent above the ceiling.

**Q.** *How can the shopper obtain a record showing what she paid in order to make positive comparison with "base period" prices?*

**A.** Every store, when requested by a customer, must give a sales slip or receipt showing the date, the name and address of the store the item sold, and the price received.

**Q.** *Is there a price ceiling on sales of real estate?*

**A.** No. Sales of land and buildings are exempt from price control.

**Q.** *A retailer sold an item during the "base period" for 15 cents, and later reduced the price to 13 cents. May he now raise the price back to the 15-cent level?*

**A.** Yes. He may at any time re-mark the item up to his "base period" maximum.

**Q.** *How does a mail-order house, which also has retail stores, fix its price ceilings?*

**A.** Each retail store establishes its own ceiling prices, by methods prescribed by the General Maximum Price Regulation. The mail order catalogue's ceiling prices will be fixed according to the prices listed in it during the "base period."

**Q.** *Are public golf courses or dance halls covered by the General Maximum Price Regulation?*

**A.** No. The Regulation specifically exempts "motion pictures, theatres and other entertainments." Golf courses and dance halls come under the heading of "other entertainments."

**Q.** *Suppose an electric appliance distributor refuses to sell automatic toasters unless a tray set is purchased with a toaster, although he made no such requirement during the "base period." The total price for the toaster plus tray set is not greater than the sum of the ceiling prices for each. Does this practice violate the General Maximum Price Regulation?*

**A.** Yes. If the seller's customers were not required to buy a combination of articles during the "base period," they may not be required to do so now.

**Q.** *Are books, newspapers, or magazines covered by any maximum price regulation?*

**A.** No. These are specifically excepted from the term "commodity" in the Price Control Act.

**Q.** *Will ceiling prices be the same in every store for the same article?*

**A.** No, except for nylon hosiery and a few other items the maximum price may vary from store to store.

**Q.** *If a food is under a price ceiling can a merchant reduce the weight without decreasing the price proportionately?*

**A.** No. A reduction in quantity without a corresponding reduction in selling price constitutes a price increase and is a violation of the General Maximum Price Regulation.

**Q.** *What action may a consumer take to recover in the case of an overcharge which violates a price ceiling?*

**A.** Shoppers have the legal right to bring civil suits against storekeepers who charge more for an article than OPA regulations allow. Consumers may sue for \$50 or treble the amount of the overcharge, whichever is greater, plus attorney's fees and court costs.

**Q.** *What is being done to control quality and to prevent quality deteriorations?*

**A.** OPA has set specific quality standards in a number of its price regulations. An action of this kind was the order forbidding manufacturers to reduce the size or quality of soap without first having such changes approved by OPA.

Emergency standards of quality in connection with OPA and WPB wartime supply and price control measures will be developed by the Standards Division of the Office of Price Administration.

These standards will not only make price control more effective but will help to save vital war materials and make fuller use of the Nation's production facilities.

... and here are the things† on which you should see

## CEILING PRICES POSTED!

October 1, 1942

[ The Regulation requires that prices must be posted where  
you can see them easily on all of these cost-of-living items. ]

### TOBACCO, DRUGS, TOILETRIES, AND SUNDRIES

(All brands, grades, and sizes, except where otherwise indicated)

#### Tobacco:

Cigarettes.  
Smoking tobacco, in  
cans and packages.

#### Packaged household drugs:

Aspirin tablets.  
Milk of magnesia, liq-  
uid.  
Cod liver oil, liquid.  
Epsom salts.

#### Boric acid.

Castor oil and mineral  
oil.  
Witch-hazel and rub-  
bing alcohol.

#### Toiletries and sun- dries:

Hand and toilet soaps.  
Dentifrices (paste,  
powder, and liquid).  
Shaving cream.

#### Toothbrushes.

Sanitary napkins.  
Razor blades.  
Facial tissues.

#### Infants' food:

All types.

#### Ice cream:

Bulk and packaged.

### APPAREL AND YARD GOODS

#### Men's and boys' cloth- ing:

Suits, business and  
sport.\*  
Overcoats, topcoats,  
and raincoats, busi-  
ness and sport.\*  
Trousers and slacks,  
dress, sport, and  
wash.\*  
Men's shirts, other  
than formal.\*  
Pajamas and night-  
shirts, cotton, wool,  
and part wool.\*  
Shorts, cotton.  
Undershirts, cotton  
knit.  
Union suits.  
Hosiery, other than  
pure silk and pure  
wool.\*  
Felt hats.\*  
Work shirts.  
Work pants.  
Overalls and coveralls.  
Sweaters.  
Mackinaws.\*  
Jackets, boys' only.\*  
Men's work gloves.

#### Boys' gloves and mit- tens.

Boys' blouses and  
shirts.  
Boys' snow suits.\*

#### Women's and girls' clothing:

Coats, untrimmed and  
fur-trimmed, sport  
and dress.\*  
Suits.\*  
Dresses, street and  
house.\*  
Hosiery, including  
anklets.\*  
Panties and slips.\*  
Foundation garments  
and brassieres.\*  
Women's gloves, chil-  
dren's gloves and  
mittens.\*  
Skirts.  
Blouses and shirts,  
tailored, rayon or  
cotton.\*  
Sweaters.  
Children's jackets.\*  
Nightgowns and pa-  
jamas, other than  
silk.\*

Robes and house coats,  
flannel and cotton.\*  
Children's overalls,  
slacks, sun suits and  
shorts (cotton).\*  
Children's snow suits.\*

#### Infants' clothing:

Diapers.  
Dresses, other than  
silk.  
Shirts.  
Binders.  
Sleeping garments.  
Coats, cotton, wool,  
part wool.  
Snow suits.  
Sweaters.  
Sunsuits (cotton only).

#### Yard Goods:

Cotton yard goods.  
Rayon yard goods.  
Wool and mixtures of  
wool.

#### Footwear:

Street, work, dress,  
and sport shoes for  
men, women, and  
children.\*  
Infants' shoes.  
Rubber footwear.

† Watch the papers for new additions or changes in this list.

## FOOD AND HOUSEHOLD SUNDRIES

### MEAT

#### Fresh beef:

Rib roast.  
Chuck steak.  
Top round steak.  
Rump roast.  
Chuck roast.  
Beef liver.  
Ground round steak.

#### Pork:

Loin whole roast.  
Rib end roast.  
Loin end roast.  
Best center cut chops.  
Bacon.  
Ham, whole, half, or sliced.  
Salt pork.

#### Other meat products:

Cooked or smoked ham.  
Frankfurters.

### CANNED FRUITS, VEGETABLES, AND JUICES

Canned peaches.  
Canned pears.  
Canned pineapples.  
Canned corn.  
Canned peas.  
Canned tomatoes.  
Canned pork and beans.  
Canned green beans, cut.  
Canned tomato juice.  
Canned pineapple juice.

## OTHER GROCERIES AND HOUSEHOLD SUNDRIES

Canned salmon.  
Canned vegetable soup.  
Canned tomato soup.  
Packaged flour mixes (cake, pancake, biscuit mixes only) in containers holding 3 pounds or less.  
Macaroni and spaghetti, dried, bulk, and packaged.  
Rolled oats, when packaged in containers holding 3 pounds or less.

Corn flakes.  
Bread, all types.  
Soda crackers.  
Fresh milk and cream.  
Lard, bulk and print.  
Vegetable shortening.  
Sugar, all types, packaged and bulk.  
Coffee.  
Cocoa.

Table salt.  
Corn meal, when packaged in containers holding 3 pounds or less.  
Rice, bulk or packaged.  
Toilet paper.  
Soaps (bar, flakes, powder, chips, granular, and cleansing powders).  
Paper napkins.

## HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, APPLIANCES, AND FURNISHINGS

### Appliance and equipment:

Radios and phonographs.  
Vacuum cleaners and carpet sweepers.  
Refrigerators and ice-boxes.  
Washing machines.  
Sewing machines.  
Stoves and ranges.  
Small appliances: irons, toasters, glass coffee makers, and mixers.  
Floor lamps and bridge lamps.  
Light bulbs.  
Ironing boards.

### Step-on cans.

Floor brooms.  
China and pottery tableware, in sets.  
Cooking utensils (10-quart pail, 2-quart saucepan, 5-quart teakettle).

### Furniture:

All living room, dining room and bedroom suites (sets or individual pieces).  
Kitchen tables and chairs.  
Studio couches and sofa beds.  
Mattresses.  
Bedsprings.

### Furnishings:

Rugs and carpets, size 6 by 9 feet and larger.  
Linoleum.  
Felt base floor coverings.  
Bed sheets and sheeting, cotton.\*  
Towels, cotton bathroom and kitchen.\*  
Blankets and comforts.\*  
House curtains.\*  
Bedsprings, cotton.\*  
Tablecloths and napkins, plain and print (cotton only).\*  
Window shades.

## HARDWARE, AGRICULTURAL SUPPLIES, MISCELLANEOUS

Hayforks.  
Garden and lawn rakes.  
Dirt shovels.  
Axes, single bit.  
Claw hammers.

Handsaws.  
Inside and outside house paints (ready mixed).  
Fertilizer, bulk and packaged.

Insecticides.  
Bicycles, adult sizes.  
Bicycle tires.  
Flashlights.

## ICE, FUEL, AND AUTOMOTIVE

Ice.  
Coke.  
Coal (hard and soft).  
Charcoal.

Firewood.  
Kerosene.  
Fuel oil.

Gasoline.  
Oil.  
Tires and inner tubes.

\*Asterisks indicate items on which ceiling prices may be posted by price lines.

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**how you can help  
keep wartime  
prices down!**

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